

a compilation possibly dating actually from the fourth and third centuries B.C., or even later, and much or all of it the attempt of the authors to give the sanction of antiquity to an imaginary Utopia of their own creation.

It must be repeated that the dependability of the stories about Wen Wang, Wu Wang, and Chou Kung is in debate. The trend of present opinion is to regard few facts about them as well established and to think of these rulers as very shadowy figures idealized by later generations and especially by Confucian scholars.

Some of the early monarchs of the Chou apparently extended the boundaries both of their domains and of Chinese culture. Chao Wang, the traditional dates of whose rule—according to one chronology—are B.C. 1052-1001, and his successor, Mu Wang, with reign dates—by the same chronology—of B.C. 1001-946, are said to have triumphed over the barbarians, and, among other regions, to have carried victoriously the arms of the Chinese into the valley of the Han, across the mountains which form the southern boundary of the valley of the Wei. Mu Wang especially is credited with having been an energetic and restless traveller, to have pursued his conquests beyond the Yangtze on the south, and to have penetrated to the far northwest, visiting a mysterious Hsi Wang Mu, literally, "West King Mother." Hsi Wang Mu has stimulated much discussion among Occidental sinologists, actuated as they are by a natural desire to ferret out all possible early connections between China and the West, and many ingenious guesses have been made as to her identity. The fullest details of Mu Wang's travels are to be found in an historical romance which probably dates from the first century A.D.

and the factual basis of the account is almost certainly too tenuous to yield dependable results. It seems fairly reasonable, however, to assume that these early monarchs expanded their domains, even gaining a foothold in the Yangtze Valley. It is possible, too, that tradition is right in declaring that Mu Wang modified the administrative system and the laws of the land, for this would probably be advisable if the new territory were to be assimilated.

With the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., our knowledge of events, although still meager, increases somewhat, thanks chiefly to some of the poems in the *Shih CMng*, which probably were